

1975

# A Literature Curriculum for Economically Disadvantaged Third-Graders who are Non-Readers

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## Suggested Citation

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

A LITERATURE CURRICULUM FOR ECONOMICALLY  
DISADVANTAGED THIRD-GRADERS WHO ARE NON-READERS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

One of the primary purposes of teaching children to read is to enable them to personally experience and appreciate many of the great literary works available to them, whether it be their enjoyment of a fine picture book as a child, or their appreciation of a quality novel as an adult. Yet, as we look at the curriculums of our schools, we see literature as an integral part of the English program only at the junior high, senior high, and college levels. It occurs only incidentally at the elementary level, regarded by most teachers as an "extra" to be included after other work is completed.

Some teachers may say that reading and literature are synonymous, since the basic readers we use in our schools have stories in them. But the purpose of these readers "is not to develop enjoyment of the stories as literature, but to teach 'basic reading skills'". (Sebesta and Iverson, 1975). Few children can develop a love of reading through this means.

Basic instruction in the reading skills upon which literary reading depends is necessary, but should not be over-emphasized to the neglect of the literature program. Tiedt and Tiedt (1967) feel that literary reading serves distinctive purposes over the basal reading experiences by providing

such things as exposure to excellent writing, continuity of longer stories through plot development and characterization, and greater interest value through intrigue, atmosphere, or entertainment.

There does exist a vast body of children's literature which is worthy not only of a carefully planned place in the curriculum, but also of equal concentration in terms of instructional time as compared with other programs. According to Huck (1962), the period of childhood is limited, so that if a child misses reading or hearing a book at the appropriate age for him, it is as if it were missed forever. Since the school is the only institution which reaches all children, it alone is in a unique position to bring literature and children together through an organized sequence of literary experiences that will make certain that most children will know the literature written for their age.

Although a review of the literature acknowledges the importance of children's literature, it is not enough that we merely recognize the need for planned literature curriculums in the elementary school. Indeed, many such curriculums are in existence. Most teachers, though, might assume that the use of these curriculums would only be feasible with children who have a basic reading vocabulary - a vocabulary which would enable them to begin reading at least the simplest selections from literature. Accepting this assumption would mean pre-

venting large numbers of elementary children from being exposed more than casually to the fine literature which has been created expressly for them.

Thus, literature curriculums need to be fully developed specifically for children who are either essentially non-readers or significantly retarded readers. At Callahan Elementary School, these children are found to come the majority of the time from "economically disadvantaged" backgrounds. These children are often lacking in motivation, readiness, and independent experience with books as a source of pleasure. Their special needs deserve a recognized place within a planned literature curriculum.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project was to develop a literature curriculum for third graders at Callahan Elementary School who are non-readers of "economically disadvantaged" backgrounds.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms was used in this project:

1. Literature curriculum is planned experiences in school for children via any creative literary work that has been especially written and designed to entertain, to inform, and to affect the values and understandings of those children. This curriculum was not designed for the intentional

development of specific reading skills. (Although word knowledge, comprehension, and other reading skills might be increased through the use of this curriculum, its major intent was to treat the teaching of literature as a distinctive enterprise from basic reading instruction.)

2. Non-readers in this project referred to children who have not accomplished reading at first grade level in basal texts.

3. "Economically disadvantaged" backgrounds in this project referred to the displaying of one or more of the following characteristics of children from Callahan and the surrounding rural area: (Cheyney, 1967)

- a). child's family subsides at a low socioeconomic level
- b). in migrant (dairy workers moving from one rural area to another)
- c). experience in school-related subjects such as English, spelling and math is poor
- d). ethnic language variations in child's family
- e). child is culturally different from the predominant school population

#### Limitations of the Study

There was acknowledged to exist a certain number of limitations of constraints in developing this literature program for "economically disadvantaged" non-readers.

1. Most literature written for children, including



"picture books", contains vocabulary which children who are essentially non-readers can not handle.

Hence, the curriculum was designed to help children who would not otherwise be able to fully experience these books independently.

2. Because the children had a paucity of experience with books as a source of pleasure before coming to school, and since they had failed to learn to read with two to three years of instruction in school, these children lacked motivation to read. The curriculum attempted to provide experiences with books that would cancel any previous negative experiences with books.
3. Children from "economically disadvantaged" backgrounds are handicapped by their unfamiliarity with the "language" of books - metaphors, complex sentences, abstractions, etc. (Cheyney, 1967). The curriculum provided many opportunities for the child to be exposed to the literary language of books.
4. Traditional methods of teaching literature may not be feasible with "economically disadvantaged" non-readers. The non-readers depend upon concrete experiences to learn and communicate best, limiting teaching techniques to those that stress the visual, the physical, and the active (Burns, Broman, and

Wantling, 1971)). Thus, the curriculum emphasized the use of vicarious teaching methods to expose the child to literature.

5. Many of these children had specific learning disabilities such as poor auditory and/or poor visual discrimination. Hence, the curriculum was limited in appropriate ways to present literature to the children.
6. Many of these children were lacking in adequate listening skills with which to learn even through an oral language approach. They were easily distracted and had short attention spans. The curriculum provided activities designed to hold the child's interest and positively develop any listening limitations.
7. Little cooperation or interest could be expected from the parents of these children in terms of helping to extend the children's literary experiences beyond the school environment. The curriculum provided means of involving these parents more positively in the development of their child's literary interests.

## CHAPTER II

### A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

References were made in the previous chapter to various sources who asserted viewpoints as to why a comprehensive literature program is needed for elementary school children. As the literature was further surveyed to research this project, there was found to be a predominance of authors who advocated the inclusion of children's literature as a major area of emphasis in the education of elementary school children.

According to Ried (1972), literature motivates children to see, hear, and read more and better stories. It helps them explore new interests, and even enables them to tackle new problems. It provides children with meaningful reading experiences, for it is through literature that a child gets the chance to be a participant, to be really in the lives of others as well as his own. Smith (1964) asserts that the love of reading is one of the greatest gifts which school or home can give to children. First, though, children must find pleasure in books if they are to achieve this love of reading.

Leland Jacobs (1966) comments that, "Without literature as a vital experience for children, I have the suspicion that we have spent so much time on other aspects of reading, that

we are in part to blame for the low level of adult reading habits in American life today." Tiedt and Tiedt (1967) feel that a place must be made for literature in the elementary school curriculum so that it is no longer a "frill", but is drawn firmly into the main core of essential content to be taught.

### The Relationship Between Literature and the Other Language Arts

Sebesta and Iverson (1975) see the need to differentiate the instructional programs of literature from reading and other language skills, yet without disjointing literature completely from the entire language arts program. As Iverson (1973) implies, literature lends itself well to meaningful relationships with listening, speaking, writing, and reading. He believes that a new consensus will push reading instruction into closer touch with literature. Huck (1962) feels that if children are constantly exposed to fine writing through a curriculum of literature, assumedly this exposure will be reflected to some degree in the further development of the children's skills in other areas such as speaking, writing, and reading.

Cohen (1968) supports this assumption in a study she conducted in seven elementary schools in New York City concerning the effect of literature on vocabulary and reading

achievement. Literature read aloud was chosen as an appropriate solution to reading retardation stemming from weakness of motivation and lack of readiness. "It was expected that positive involvement of a conceptual and emotional nature with the variety of experience and vocabulary that literature offers would lead the children to a realization of the pleasure to be gained from books and an assimilation of the vocabulary." The children involved in the study were of culturally limited backgrounds who tended to fall behind in reading and, therefore, in academic achievement. Teachers of the experimental groups read a story orally every day of the school year to their students and were asked to follow up the reading with a suitable activity. Specific books used with these children were chosen on the criteria of their emotional appeal and ease of conceptualization. Teachers in the control groups presented stories only occasionally, if at all.

The Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test and the Free Association Vocabulary Test were given in October and June of the research year. The results of the test showed that the experimental groups showed increases in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and quality of vocabulary over the control groups. Among the conclusions that Dr. Cohen made as a result of this study were 1) beginning stages of transition from oral language comprehension to the final use

of symbols in reading is apparently affected by continued exposure in early childhood to stories read aloud; 2) young children appear to learn vocabulary best in a context of emotional and intellectual meaning as encountered through literature; and 3) continued and regular listening to story books seems to aid facility in listening, narrative sense, and recognition of newly learned words as they appear in other contexts.

#### Literature and the Disadvantaged/Remedial Reader

Children's literature offers universal appeal to all young people, so that, according to Tiedt (1967), the literary needs of all children do not differ substantively. The differences encountered in the disadvantaged child or the remedial reader as compared to any other elementary school pupil lies in degree and emphasis. The background of the deprived child precludes knowledge of the literature of childhood which we often take for granted. As Tiedt (1967) further states, this lack of experience with literature as a pre-school child means the child hasn't received the accompanying benefits of hearing stories and sharing books with adults of his family. Chambers (1971) states that ; the remedial reader also may come to school with an insufficient experiential background which won't permit him to deal successfully with language and reading instruction. Thus, both the remedial reader and the disadvantaged reader lack the

benefits associated with literature such as 1) development of concepts through reading; 2) sufficient vocabulary growth; 3) growth and encouragement of language skills through talking about books and 4) a positive attitude toward books and their contents. (Tiedt, 1967).

Literature can offer the disadvantaged child new ideas needed to extend his experiential background. Chambers (1971) feels that a literature-based program may have value for the remedial reader who has developed problems because other approaches used to teach him reading have failed. If a child's interests, aspirations, and hobbies could be capitalized upon by providing him trade books that offer him personally valuable information or pleasure, his attempts at reading might take on new meaning and help him begin to overcome his problems.

#### Vicarious Approaches to Literature

Although we may most often think of children's literature as involving the child with printed pages he must be able to decipher, the non-reader can be helped to experience the same literature through other sensory means. Strickland (1969) notes the enormously important role that vicarious experiences play in the lives of adults as well as children. Visual experiences encountered through motion pictures, television, etc. demand less of the individual in the way of

interpretation and supplying of background than does the printed page. These forms provide sensory appeal and added dimension to the material presented to help make the impressions vivid and lasting.

Many excellent films have been made from some of the finest children's literature. Ried (1972) feels that viewing films made from favorite books and stories would give great impetus to the reading interests of young people. Working with disadvantaged children in particular, a stimulating film can supply these experience-poor children with something to talk about with their teacher and classmates, thus supplying opportunities for expanding their knowledge in many ways. (Tiedt, 1967).

Other visual experiences to literature can be approached through the use of wordless picture books. Hymes (1964) refers to these books as the printed page's approach to the genius of the film. The advantages of using these books lie in the universal appeal pictures have for all children. Fagerlic (1975) suggests that these particular books can be used to stimulate language development in children who need many experiences in oral expression. Because plots are visually presented in these books, a child with limited background who seemingly has nothing to talk about, can tell what is happening by interpreting the actions depicted in the se-



quence of pictures. Consequently, he may discover the enjoyment that can be derived from books. Realizing that he can interpret a book on his own may stimulate him to seek further independent experiences with other books.

Some "picture books" are so called because they contain many pictures to express the content, yet printed words do appear to complement and further develop the plot initiated through the illustrator's work. Independent experiences with these particular books by non-readers might seem fruitless, yet Reid (1972) feels that a child need not even know how to read to be greatly influenced by the contents of such books. By carefully observing pictures, children can be shown details about themselves and others which they have not noticed or understood previously. An illustration can give a child a deeper understanding of the relationship between nature and man by showing him new ways of seeing and sharpening his view.

Oral experiences for children through listening to literature provide another vicarious means of presenting literature to the disadvantaged non-reader. Reading aloud to children quality books they could not otherwise enjoy, provides many opportunities for the child to grow in experience, general knowledge, and vocabulary. According to Strickland (1969), children's listening and comprehension levels go on ahead of their ability to decipher material on the printed page.

Therefore, listening to stories and other material beyond the child's reading level should have a real and legitimate place in all elementary classrooms.

Literature further provides a basis for something to talk about for the child as he strives to develop linguistic fluency in communicating his involvement with an exciting book and his expression of individual ideas. But according to Ried (1972), one of the primary results of reading aloud to children is the bond that is created between child and book that might otherwise never develop. Tiedt (1967) also acknowledges the rapport which is established between the teacher as a person and each individual student as a person, giving this particular experience with books a personal touch (through eye contact between student and teacher, the warmth of the situation, and the shared experience) that is not as readily achieved when presenting other content to children. According to Strickland (1969), good oral reading by the teacher not only serves as a model for the child's own reading and an aid to interpretation, but it enhances the child's interest in reading independently.

Storytelling provides many of the same advantages for the disadvantaged non-reader as does story-reading to children. Since storytelling has no place in the life in many homes, schools must assume the responsibility for it by providing a larger place for it in the school than it occupies today. (Strickland, 1969).

Sebesta and Iverson (1975) feel that because our society is heading toward a broader concept of not just reading comprehension, but visual literacy and oral expression as well, storytelling will gain in reputation. They state that "...storytelling is still one of the best ways of comprehending literature."

Brooks (1973) is of the opinion that when literature is introduced orally to children, the child's role should be enlarged through modes of involvement and participation. There should be some purposeful activity to follow in reading or telling a story aloud so that the child can participate meaningfully in the experience. LaFlamme (1975) suggests such modes of participation as story dramatizations and creative movement. Donoghue (1975) considers other interpretive activities such as puppetry, finger plays, pantomime, and dance interpretations of stories.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

The first chapter in this study discussed briefly the need for a planned literature curriculum in the elementary school which would be given as much emphasis in instructional terms as other programs. The fundamental emphasis of this project, however, was directed not merely toward the development of a literature curriculum for all elementary children, but specifically toward the development of a curriculum to be used with children who are non-readers from "economically disadvantaged" backgrounds.

#### Needs Assessment

The need for this particular curriculum was based upon several observations and pertinent data. There existed no planned curriculum in literature for children at Callahan Elementary School at any grade level. Any teaching of literature that did occur was quite sporadic, entailing teachers reading random stories to their children during rest periods or after play periods to help induce relaxation. All children spent a thirty-minute period in the library each week, the majority of that period being spent in returning books and selecting new ones for the coming week. Films and filmstrips were

sometimes shown during this period, but they were not necessarily oriented towards literature. Again, story-reading occurred here sporadically, but no storytelling occurred.

Children at this school were homogeneously grouped according to reading level. Because students were evaluated at the end of the year and their placement for the following year based upon the last year's progress, a teacher's class for the next year was pre-determined for her before the school year began.

Hence, this curriculum was specifically intended for use with the class to which the author was assigned for the 1976-77 school year. This group was composed of sixteen children reading at the lowest level of all third grade children at the school. Several factors were examined to document the needs of these children in terms of a literature program.

None of these children at the end of the 1975-76 second grade school year were reading at first grade level in basal texts. All were still in "pre-primers". Test results on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills and the Slossen Oral Reading Test indicated that the majority of these children were reading either below first grade level or at the first month of first grade level. The Short Form Test of Academic Aptitude indicated that the Intelligence Quotients of these children ranged from 68 to 104. Not only was the reading performance of these children below grade level, but also performance in other school-

related subjects in the general curriculum, such as language and mathematics. Several of the children had been tested by the guidance department for placement in specific learning disability programs, speech programs, and Title I remedial reading programs. (See Table 1)

Some indications of the economic background of these children was shown by the fact that 75% of the children had been given free or reduced lunch rates because the annual incomes of their families were too low to provide the children with enough money to purchase their lunch each day.

In this class, eight of the students were boys, eight were girls. Eight of the students were black, eight were white. Twenty-five percent of the children came from homes where only one of the parents was present.

A reading interest inventory was given to these children in late May of 1976. From this inventory came such information as the following: Only one of the children had an abundant number of books at home from which the parents read to the child regularly; Thirty-seven percent of the children had never been to a motion picture theatre; Sixty-three percent indicated desires to visit places they had never been such as the beach, a museum, Disney World, and even the grocery store; Eighty-eight percent of the children had never visited the bookmobile that comes to Callahan bi-monthly in place of a public library.

### General Goals of the Curriculum

Considering both the characteristics of the children for whom this particular curriculum was designed and the advantages of exposing any child to good literature, the following general goals were developed for the curriculum:

1. The child will be exposed to great literature of the past and present to increase his awareness of good literature.
2. The child will increase his knowledge of his own culture and that of others through literature.
3. The child will experience desirable changes in interests and tastes via experiences with literature.
4. The child will be surrounded by a classroom climate which will encourage his wide interaction with all forms of children's literature.
5. The child will discover enjoyment from books in childhood which will facilitate continued enjoyment of literature through the adult years as well.
6. The child will develop listening skills and increase his span of listening attention through exposure to the curriculum.
7. The child will expand his listening and speaking vocabulary through increased exposure to literature.
8. The child will be visually motivated to experience

literature independently.

9. The child's parents will become more directly involved in the literary growth of their child.

#### Selection of Content or Strategies

It will be remembered from Chapter II that Dr. Cohen's study, among other research surveyed, confirmed that exposure to literature read aloud facilitated growth in reading skills. Coupled with the fact that the curriculum developed for this project was intended for use with children who were "economically disadvantaged" non-readers, the major thrust of this curriculum was aimed towards exposing children to literature through predominantly oral experiences, supported by visual modes whenever possible.

As Brooks (1973) indicates, the oral approach is not only logical, but provides an exceptional opportunity to share an experience with students through an act of communication where both the teacher and student are listeners, or where the teacher can operate as the essential connection between the artist and the audience. This oral/visual approach to literature should offer both teacher and student more excitement and variety as compared to a traditional approach to literature which emphasizes the child's independent relationship to the printed page of a particular piece of literature.

The availability of so many media such as records, tapes, films, etc. make this approach feasible and non-restrictive.



Thus, the media and methods suggested in this curriculum took advantage of the communication strengths of the disadvantaged student to whom this curriculum was geared, by employing teaching techniques that stressed the oral and visual as well as the physical and active. The following modes were used to develop the specific concerns of the curriculum:

1. story-reading by the teacher
2. storytelling by the teacher
3. iconic presentation of stories
4. filmstrips
5. films
6. records
7. record/book combinations
8. wordless books
9. picture books
10. interpretive activities

#### Evaluative Procedures

The evaluative instruments designed for use with this curriculum interpreted not only the child's growth in his literary experiences, but the teacher's and parent's role in this growth as well. The instruments were teacher-made and based upon the objectives and desired outcomes of using the curriculum. Because most of the goals and concerns fell in the affective domain and elude evaluation, the instruments

were based primarily on the teacher's thoughts and observations as to how the children were reacting to experiences in literature.

## CHAPTER IV

## CURRICULUM DESIGN

The final curriculum design was based upon concerns of the curriculum complemented by suggested teaching strategies. This design was expressed in terms of concerns or intended outcomes, rather than through specific objectives, because the curriculum was not intended to be performance oriented. It was directed, instead, towards the development and growth of the aesthetic realm of the child's literary experiences. The design was also based upon several presumptions concerning the teacher's competencies and the physical aspects of the classroom.

Primarily, it was assumed that the teacher would already be knowledgeable in the subject of children's literature, being familiar with quality books and stories appropriate for use with primary children. Story-reading and storytelling by the teacher would be the major means through which the child would initially experience a book. Hence, it was assumed that the teacher would possess skills in the oral presentation of stories to children. She would have a basic and growing repertoire of stories she could "tell" to children. Whenever possible, these presentations would involve the teacher with as small a group of children as possible, to provide a more intimate and meaningful experience between teacher and child. As the year progressed, the length of the presentation sessions would be gradually in-

creased to allow the child to experience longer books or stories.

After a child had been exposed to a book or story by the teacher, it was assumed that some activity would be implemented as a follow-up to further the child's interaction with that book or story. Hence, it was assumed that all available media resources would be used whenever possible to reinforce the initial contact (films, filmstrips, telecasts, iconic presentations). Class excursions and community resource people would be used to elicit interest in books and stories about a particular subject.

It was further presumed that the teacher would provide attractive physical surroundings in the classroom which would entice the child to experience the components of the curriculum more enthusiastically. Attractive bulletin boards, posters, and displays would be used in conjunction with the curriculum whenever possible. A large area of the room would be set aside for use as a literary reading/resource center. Here would be found materials for children to create interpretive projects for books and stories, listening stations, arrangements of hardbound and paperback books, comfortable chairs, and a large rug upon which groups of students could sit while listening to stories or reading them.

It was presumed that books and stories used with this curriculum would be chosen from all of the following areas:

folk and fairy tales

animal stories

American folklore

modern fanciful tales

realistic literature

regional stories of the United States

biographies

historical fiction

stories of other lands

poetry

Most importantly, consistency would be required with the implementation of this curriculum. Adequate instruction time would be allotted every day for the teacher to present a piece of literature and for the children to interact with it through some meaningful activity.

#### Curricular Concerns and Teaching Strategies

The following are the curricular concerns generated by the development of this project and its goals:

1. The child will paraphrase literary materials in his own words.
  - a) After a child has listened to a story or read a book, he will "retell" the story in his own words orally or by tape to a small group of children or the teacher.
  - b) The child will tell an original story to a group of children or on tape.
  - c) Using "point-of-view technique"<sup>1</sup> the child will respond to leading questions about a familiar story or book,

stating his answers in first-person from the point of view of a particular story character.

- d) The child will participate in a "brainstorming" discussion with other children concerning some aspect of a familiar book brought to light by the teacher.
- e) The child will participate in role-playing activities developed around a thematic problem from a familiar book or story which the teacher sets before the group.

2. The child will interact and respond to illustrations in children's literature.

- a) After reading a picture book to the children, the teacher will carefully re-examine the illustrations with the children. The children will be asked to pretend they were the artist, explaining how they made their pictures and why they chose to make a picture at a particular part of the story.
- b) The child will create a picture using the same methods or media employed by the illustrator of a book with which they are familiar.
- c) The child will view an unfamiliar picture book with the teacher. The teacher blocks out parts of each picture and the child tells what the masked portion should contain.
- d) Several children will independently view the same

"wordless" picture book. In a group, each child will tell the story as he "saw" it in the pictures.

Reasons for differences in stories should be discussed.

- e) Using two familiar picture books, the child will re-examine the illustrations, contrasting and comparing them through teacher-lead discussion.

3. The child will acquire skills in understanding the beginning concepts of plot, characterization, and setting in literature.

- a) The child will choose a character from a familiar story and a rhythm instrument he wants to represent that character. As the teacher re-reads the story, the child taps the instrument once each time his character is mentioned. (Suitable stories for this activity should contain a frequently repeated cast of characters.)
- b) After the child has experienced a short story, he is given pictures of the story on cards. He will place them in correct order according to the sequence of events in the story.
- c) After the child is familiar with the characters in a book or story, he will dress up as the character of his choice. He will then tell about himself and his experiences to others. (Or the child may dress a doll instead of himself.)
- d) The child will construct a diorama depicting the setting

of a familiar story or book.

- e) The child will present a pantomime skit depicting the plot of a familiar story or book.
- f) The child will draw on a "roll" movie or mural a sequence of pictures to depict the plot of a familiar story or book.
- g) The child will draw a simple map to show the setting or location of important events in a familiar story or book.
- h) The child will be asked leading questions as to how a character feels, looks, walks, talks, and the reasons for his behavior.
- i) The child will make a puppet for a particular character in a familiar story or book. Phrases which the character speaks are extracted from the story by the teacher who presents them one at a time to the child. The child will manipulate the puppet in exaggerated movements which correspond to the character's phrase.
- j) The child will be presented two different versions of the same folk tale. Through discussion of one character at a time, the teacher points out differences in words or phrases used to describe the character. The child is asked to note differences in the same character verbally or through drawing the character as he seems in the first story, then drawing him again as he seems in the second story.



4. The child will be able to identify the mood a particular piece of literature conveys to him.

- a) After the children are familiar with a story and its characters, the teacher helps the children determine the mood of a particular scene through leading questions. The group will then pantomime or dramatize together the feeling the scene gives to them.
- b) Before the teacher reads a book to the children, a simple hand puppet is used to introduce the story and set the tone or mood for the children's listening experience.

5. The child will present his reaction to a piece of literature through creative interpretation.

- a) The child will listen to a story with a surprise ending omitted. The child will invent a possible ending for the story and share it with others.
- b) "Play-in-a-box"<sup>2</sup> - The child will be encouraged to act out a familiar folk or fairy tale with some other children. A strong cardboard box with handles is equipped with the story or book, basic props (labelled), command cards with simple pictorial directions if needed. Numerous boxes of familiar books and stories should be placed around the classroom for easy access by the children.
- c) When the child is familiar with a story or a book, he

will participate in a small group presentation of a miniaturized play form. Cardboard or flannel board cut-outs are displayed with a book or placed together in appropriately labelled boxes or envelopes.

- d) The teacher helps a group of children select a story or book familiar to them which can be easily exaggerated. The children will retell the story through body movement.
- e) The child will construct a mobile of characters from a familiar story or book.
- f) The child will participate in choral reading of poetry.

#### Evaluative Instruments

Following are the evaluative instruments of the curriculum designed for use by the teacher, the student, and the parents:

#### Teacher Evaluation

How many books does the child look at with interest each day?

What kinds of books is the child spending his time to look at and read?

Does the child make use of other media (magazines, film-strips, listening centers) through which to experience literature?

Does the child listen to and enjoy story-reading and story-telling by the teacher?

Does the child use any free time in the classroom to experience books?

Does the child borrow books from the classroom for home reading?

Does the child bring available books from home to share with the teacher or class members?

Does the child participate in dramatization of literature presented to him?

Does the child like to retell a story or memorize a poem that has appealed to him?

Does the child show sincerity in expressive activities, such as paintings, that develop from literature?

Does the child try to read independently a literature selection which has previously been presented to him by something or someone else?

#### Child Evaluation

Am I reading more books than I did last year?

Am I taking more books home from school than I did last year?

Am I going to the school library at any times besides the class's schedules visit?

Am I going to the bookmobile?

Am I enjoying stories the teacher reads or tells?

Am I sharing books I read with others - class members, friends, family, teacher?

Am I spending too much time with books about one thing?

Am I reading poems?

Am I enjoying books more and more?

Parent Evaluation

Are we taking time to read with our child at home?

Does our child have his own books or library books at home to read?

Does our child have a library card?

Do we encourage our child to go to the school library and bookmobile?

Do we talk about books, magazines, and newspaper articles in out home?

Does some member of the family practice reading aloud to others at home?

## CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONSEQUENCES AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was concerned with the development of a planned curriculum in literature for primary children who were essentially non-readers from "economically disadvantaged" backgrounds. The initial section of this chapter will summarize the procedures used in developing this curriculum and give a brief synopsis of the curriculum itself. This chapter will end the curriculum project with a discussion of the consequences and recommendations generated by the development of this project.

Summary

A review of the literature acknowledged the need for planned literature curriculums in the elementary school which would be placed within the major core of essential content to be taught. The relationship between literature and the other language arts was conceded to be close in that exposure to a planned literature curriculum developed children's skills in other areas such as speaking, writing, and reading. Literature is thought to offer the disadvantaged/remedial reader opportunities to increase his experiential background, grow in vocabulary and language skills, and develop a positive attitude towards books. Vicarious approaches to literature

can play a major role in involving the disadvantaged/non-reader with printed pages he would not otherwise be able to experience.

The curriculum in this project was developed specifically for a class of sixteen third-graders at Callahan Elementary School who were grouped homogeneously according to reading ability. Data supported that these children had experienced failure with reading for two to three consecutive years and were thus unable to independently read and enjoy the vast realm of literature written expressly for them. Other data, which included feedback from an interest inventory given each child, indicated that these children came to school with poor experiential backgrounds. These factors supported the need for these children to be involved with a planned literature curriculum. These factors also contributed to the choice of media and methods to be used in the curriculum. Hence, the final curriculum project used predominantly oral/visual modes such as storytelling, wordless books, films, and interpretive activities to accomplish its goals and objectives.

### Consequences

Because this curriculum was developed for the 1976-77 school year and had not yet been implemented, there is no data to indicate what objectives this curriculum actually accomplished. Hence, the consequences of using this curriculum will be discussed in theory only at this point.

The intended use of this curriculum is significant in that it will be the only planned literature curriculum ever to be implemented at Callahan Elementary School. It is even more significant when considering its possible use by other schools, because in the research there was found to exist no planned curriculum designed for elementary children who could not read. With limited modifications, this curriculum could be adapted for use with children of other primary grade levels who are experiencing reading difficulties. As implied in the research, the use of such a literature curriculum as this could affect not only the child's direct interaction with literature, but also his performance in related subject areas, particularly the language arts. Positive gains in reading skills such as listening, word knowledge, and comprehension are likely to occur. Most importantly, if the teacher implements this curriculum consistently and enthusiastically, the child may find new pleasures and experiences through the literature to which he is exposed that will serve as a stimulus for successful experiences with reading itself. These experiences will positively contribute to the child's self-concept and will hopefully be carried over to successes in other subject areas as well.

#### Recommendations

Because the research did indicate the lack of planned

literature curriculums for non-readers, it is hoped that more curriculums of this nature will be developed. To convince parents as well as educators of the value of such curriculums, though, more research is needed to positively and accurately prove the benefits of their use. A step forward in this direction could be made at Callahan Elementary School by using this curriculum with an experimental group of children and comparing the results on suitable tests with children of a control group not exposed to the curriculum. Hopefully, the experimental group would make positive gains which would convince school and county administrators of the importance of using such a curriculum. The curriculum could then be adopted, with minor changes, for use with all primary children at the school who are plagued with remedial reading problems. Other literature curriculums could be easily designed for use with children reading successfully according to grade level. The entire school would then be exposed to an appropriate planned literature curriculum. Hopefully, this would evolve to the use of planned literature curriculums in the upper grades as well.

Yet, even if appropriate literature curriculums are developed, the focus remains on the teacher. It is often acknowledged that she makes the difference in any teaching practice. A review of the literature for this project indicated



a wealth of resources, including good new books for all ages at all levels of difficulty, to use in developing dynamic literature programs. However, only one teacher employing these resources will produce a limited impact. Efforts are needed to help all teachers more effectively bring children and books together. Obviously, the preparation and training of teachers is a crucial factor here and should receive more attention in both pre-service and in-service courses. Also to be examined is the role "co-operating teachers" play in providing their student teachers with experiences in children's literature. The teacher should lead her "apprentice" to strive towards the goal of teaching children to become life-long readers of literature.

We see education turning back to the "basics", particularly here in the state of Florida where children are now required to be able to read competently, among other things, before they can graduate from high school. Consequently, some question may arise as to the practicality of introducing yet another curriculum for teachers to use. Hopefully, though, literature will soon be proven to be a subject area which should be given as much emphasis in the total curriculum as any other "basis", because it can contribute vastly to the child's competencies in so many other areas of the curriculum. It's value cannot be further denied when it can be used to motivate

children to explore new interests, to better understand humanity in general, and to think more creatively. Most importantly, if through literature we can lead children to the discovery that enjoyment can be derived from books, we will have contributed to a more literate and informed society as these children carry over their pleasurable experiences with books into their adult years.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
INTEREST INVENTORY

## INTEREST INVENTORY

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## A. Play and other activities

1. When you have time at home to do as you please, what do you like to do best? (10 play activities, 6 work activities)

2. What games do you like best to play? (4 puzzles, 6 toys, 6 baseball)

3. Do you like to help your mother or father? \_\_\_\_ How?  
(all answered yes - all indicated house or yard work)

4. What tools or playthings do you have at home? (7 bikes, 6 dolls, 3 toy cars)

5. Do you have any pets? Yes 14 No 2 If yes, what? \_\_\_\_  
(12 dogs, 2 cats)

6. What do you like to do most in school? (7 work math, 3 play blocks, 2 writing, 2 puzzles, 2 art)

7. If you could have three wishes which might come true, what would they be?

1st wish (most indicated toys, bikes, or visiting places)

2nd wish (same)

3rd wish (same)

8. If you could buy anything you wanted for yourself, what would you buy? (12 toys, 4 food items)

9. Do you ever wish you were someone else? Yes 8 No 8  
If yes, who? (3 classmates, 5 family members)

10. Are you afraid of anything? Yes 10 No 6 If yes, what?  
(6 ghosts, 4 snakes or spiders)

## B. Television and Movies

11. Do you go to the movies? Yes 12 No 4
12. What movie do you like best? (2 Jaws, 2 Kung Fu, 1 Bengi, others no indication)
13. When do you watch T.V.? (13 after school and dinner, 2 some, 1 no T.V.)
14. What T.V. program do you like best? (10 cartoons, 4 Gilligan, 2 Mickey Mouse)

## C. Reading

15. Do you like to have someone read a story to you? Yes all No   . If yes, what kind of stories do you like to hear?     
(10 animal stories, 6 fairy tales)
16. Do you like to look at magazines? Yes 11 No 5 If yes, which magazines? (1 car, 1 funny, 1 People, others no indication)
17. Do you like to look at books? Yes all No    If yes, what books have you liked most? (12 animals, 2 fairy tales, 2 mystery)
18. Do you have any books of your own? Yes 11 No 5 If yes, what are some of them? (5 animals, 4 fairy tale, 2 cowboys)
19. Do you go to the bookmobile or public library? Yes 1 No 45

In parentheses is indicated some of the majority responses which the project class gave to the interest inventory.

## APPENDIX B

TABLE OF  
STUDENT PROFILES OF THE PROJECT CLASS

TABLE 1

## STUDENT PROFILES OF THE PROJECT CLASS

	IQ	CTBS	SORT	SPEECH	SLD	RL
Boy 1	97	1.1	.8	Yes		Yes
Boy 2	91	.6	1.0		Yes	
Boy 3	75	1.6	.7			Yes
Boy 4	89	1.5	1.0		Yes	Yes
Boy 5	81	1.3	1.1			
Boy 6	74	1.5	1.0			Yes
Boy 7	89	1.1	.8		Yes	
Boy 8	96	1.2	1.0	Yes		
Girl 1	104	1.3	1.1			
Girl 2	68	1.6	.9			
Girl 3	91	.7	1.1			Yes
Girl 4	87	1.2	1.1		Yes	
Girl 5	73	.7	1.2	Yes		Yes
Girl 6	85	1.3	1.0			Yes
Girl 7	78	.7	.5			
Girl 8	86	1.3	1.1		Yes	

SLD = specific learning disability

RL = reading lab



## APPENDIX C

## CHECK-LIST FOR PARENTS

## CHECK-LIST FOR PARENTS

We know that you want your child to do well in school this year and other years to come. His success depends not only on his teacher, but you as well. We are doing many things this year to help your child grow with books to become a better person and student. Won't you please help us at home? Here's how:

1. Listen to your child read!

When he brings a book home to you, let him "show off". Even if he makes mistakes or doesn't know all the words, let him share the book with you. Try to find some time each day for this.

2. Listen to your child talk!

When he wants to tell you about something that has happened at school or anywhere else, listen to him and talk to him about his experiences. This will help him with some of his reading skills.

3. Provide your child with books at home!

If you are unable to buy your child hard-bound books, there are inexpensive paper-back books available.

(You may get a list of some companies that produce these from me.) If this is not possible, take your child to the bookmobile. You can check out books for you or your child for a whole month, FREE! The bookmobile is parked at the Callahan Health Center the first and third Fridays of each month, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Please come and visit your child's classroom. You are always welcome! Just call 879-2121 to make arrangements.

## FOOTNOTES

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Sebesta, Sam Leaton, and Iverson, William J. Literature for Thursday's Child. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1975.

<sup>2</sup>La Flamma, Robert H. More Meaningful Storytime in Kindergarten. Elementary English, January, 1975, 52(1), 69-72.

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